CHAPTER XLVIII: A STRANGE PLAY

THERE'S NO NEED. I HAD SOMETHING WHILE OUT.

WILL YOU BE HAVING LUNCH HERE, MASTER RUSKA?

WHERE IS LUCRETIA?

WELCOME HOME YOUNG MASTER.

SHE WAS TAKEN BY A SUDDEN ZEAL, AND HAS SPENT THE AFTERNOON STUDYING...

IS MY MOTHER STILL IN THE INNER ROOMS?

I SEE...

SHORTLY AFTER TAKING LUNCH WITH THE MADAME.

I'M MERELY GIVING A GREETING.

IT MIGHT BE BEST TO WAIT FOR THE YOUNG LADY...

ERM...

I COMPLETED MY FIRST ASSIGNMENT SINCE PROMOTION SAFELY.

I JUST RETURNED MOTHER...

WITH THIS I'M FINALLY...

...

TO TELL THE TRUTH...

I DON'T MUCH CARE FOR THE PROMOTION ANYWAY.

EVEN IF I'M PRAISED, I CAN'T FEEL MUCH JOY AT ANYTHING.

EVEN IF I IMPROVE MY SKILLS...

ALL MY PASSION HAS FADED...

NO MATTER WHAT I DO, IT'S JUST FUTILE AND BLEAK...

SINCE LOSING VALERIA...

JUST WHAT IN THE WORLD AM I TO DO?!

PLEASE TELL ME MOTHER...

FROM HEREON I...!

SILENCE...

JUST WHO ARE YOU? ENOUGH!

NOISY PEOPLE CAN GO PLAY ELSEWHERE.

THIS IS MY ROOM.

LEAVE.

MO... THER...

HAH...

BEFORE YOU RETURN TO BEING MY MOTHER?!

ENOUGH OF THIS, PLEASE!

JUST HOW LONG IS IT GOING TO BE...

TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT MY FACE!

I'M YOUR...

WH... WHAT. STOP THIS!

GET OFF ME, GET OFF ME NOW!

DO YOU STILL NOT KNOW WHO I AM?!

!

DON'T TOUCH ME...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING BROTHER?!

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LUCRETIA.

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DEMITORIUS!

MOTHER DEAREST!

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HURRY UP AND LEAVE...

WAAAAAH, MOTHER...!

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JUST WHEN DID...

THIS WHOLE FARCE BEGIN?

WE PROMISED RIGHT, THAT YOU'D BE A GOOD GIRL.

THERE THERE, DON'T CRY.

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I'M SCARED, MOTHER...

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THEY HOLD THE SAME NAME, BUT HAVE SWAPPED ROLES.

YET THE CURTAIN WON'T FALL ON THIS STRANGE PLAY...

THIS MUST BE SOME HILARIOUS JOKE BY THE GODS.

EVEN IF I WERE TO ACCEPT THIS TRAGIC FATE AND STAR ALONGSIDE THEM...

I MUST BE CONTENT AS A SPECTATOR...

AND CONTINUE ON RESIGNED...

NO ROLE IS AVAILABLE TO ME.

WHO KNOWS HOW MANY YEARS WILL PASS IN IDLENESS...

HE SHOULD BE THE ONE...

TO FACE PUNISHMENT, YET...

MOTHER...

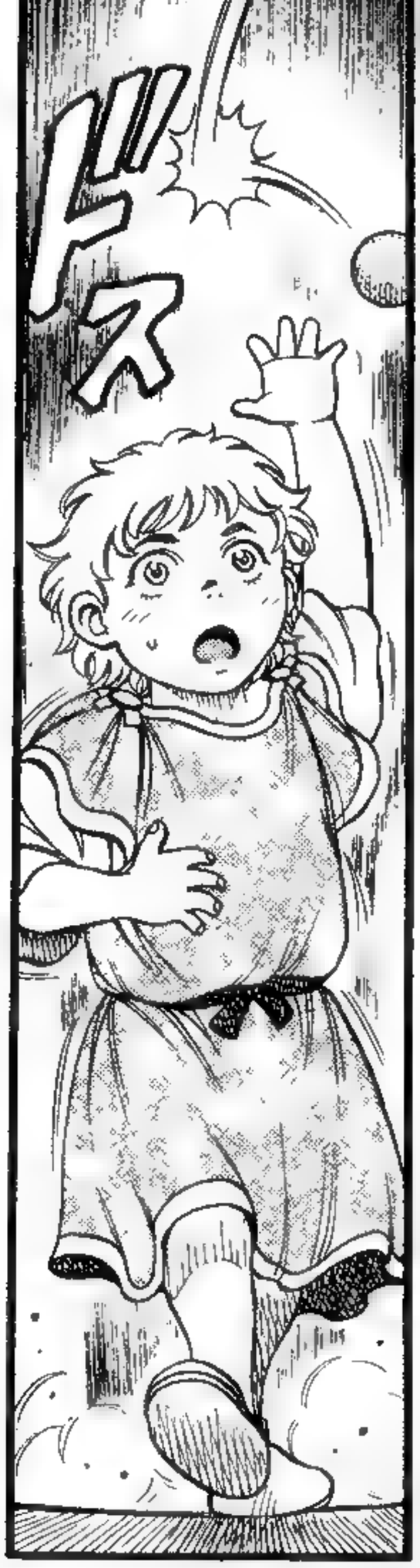
LOOK!

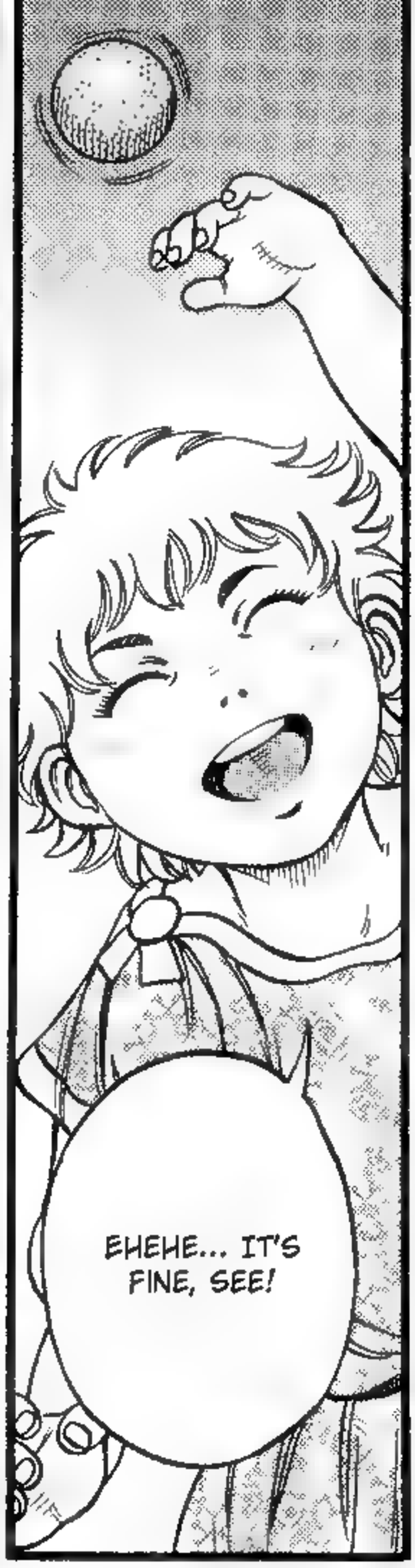
LOOK, HERE!

MOTHER!

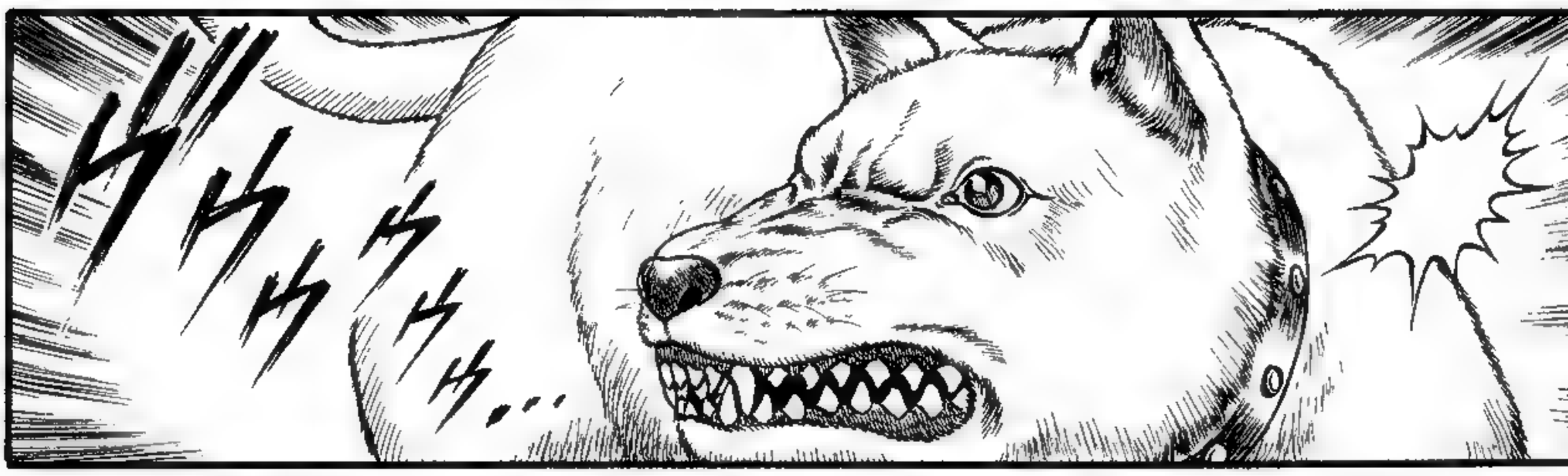
MOTHER HAS REVERTED TO LIVING A PHANTOM LIFE AS A LITTLE GIRL...

HER HEART SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN EXILED FAR AWAY.




EHEHE... IT'S FINE, SEE!

IF YOU FALL OVER AGAIN YOU COULD INJURE YOURSELF WITHOUT REALISING.
TAKE CARE TO LOOK WHERE YOU'RE GOING RUSKA.
GROWL
GROWL



RUSKA!

DRESSING MY SON UP IN FEMALE CLOTHES...

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS LUCRETIA?

DEMI-TORIUS.

HMPH... IF YOU'RE LONELY YOU SHOULD SAY AS MUCH.

UNFORTUNATELY YOU'RE NOT INVOLVED.

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN BACK YET...!

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WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?!

PLEASE, DON'T SUDDENLY STARTLE ME!

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I'VE COME TO TAKE RUSKA WITH ME!

JUST GET UP AND WALK AWAY, I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR VOICE.

NOW, HAND HIM OVER.

AAH!

NO, YOU PROMISED I COULD RAISE HIM TILL HE WAS FIVE!

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IF YOU'D WANTED SOMEONE TO KEEP AT HAND AND PAMPER, YOU SHOULD'VE HAD A GIRL.

YOU'RE ALWAYS WELCOME FOR HELP WITH THAT!

YOU BRUTE!

YOU DEMON!

HAH... IS THIS MY SON THEN?

STOP IT!

PLEASE, GIVE ME BACK MY RUSKA!

MO-THER!

MO-THER!

MO-THER!

I CAN NOT RECALL THAT AS THE DAY ON WHICH I MET MY FATHER, INSTEAD IT WAS THE DAY I PARTED FROM MY MOTHER.

BACK THEN I DID NOT KNOW THE IDENTITY OF THAT GIANT MAN.

IT'S STILL PAINFUL THEN BROTHER...

YOU STILL CAN'T FORGET ABOUT VALERIA EH...

NO MATTER HOW MANY YEARS MAY PASS, THERE'S NO REASON FOR ME TO FORGET HER.

DON'T TALK SO CARELESSLY.

YOU'RE A STRONG PERSON SO...

I'M SURE YOU CAN RECOVER YOUR FOOTING BUT...

IT'S NOT SUCH A FLIMSY THING!

IT'S NOT EXACTLY A SIMPLE PROBLEM.

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IT MIGHT BE BETTER IF VALERIA HEADED ELSEWHERE...

FOR... A WHILE I'D BEEN THINKING...

I'M SORRY BROTHER...

WEREN'T YOU ON GOOD TERMS?!

WHAT IS THIS?!

W... WELL...!

THAT WERE VALERIA... TO LEAVE YOU THEN...

ALWAYS...

BEHIND YOUR BACK...

WHAT'RE YOU SAYING ALL OF A SUDDEN...?!

EH... WH... WHAT...?

I'D HAVE BEEN LEFT BEHIND...

LEFT BEHIND WITH MOTHER!

HAD YOU AND VALERIA MARRIED THE TWO OF YOU...

I FIGURED THE TWO OF YOU WOULD'VE GONE OFF ELSEWHERE!

BUT SHE REALLY IS GONE...

SHE REALLY DID END UP DEAD...

THAT VALERIA AND I WERE SUCH HEARTLESS PEOPLE...?

I'M SORRY.

DID...

DID YOU THINK...

DON'T CRY LUCRETIA.

WHAT ARE YOU APOLOGIS-ING TO ME FOR?

ABOUT SOMEONE SO KIND...

TO HAVE HAD SUCH CRUEL THOUGHTS...

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SOMEONE WHO HAD ALWAYS BEEN SO TENDER TO ME...

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えっ..

BUT THEN, WHO IS IN THE WRONG?

YOU'VE DONE NOTHING WRONG...

NOT ANGRY...

ARE YOU...

JUST WHERE CAN I GO SHOULDERING THIS NOTHINGNESS?

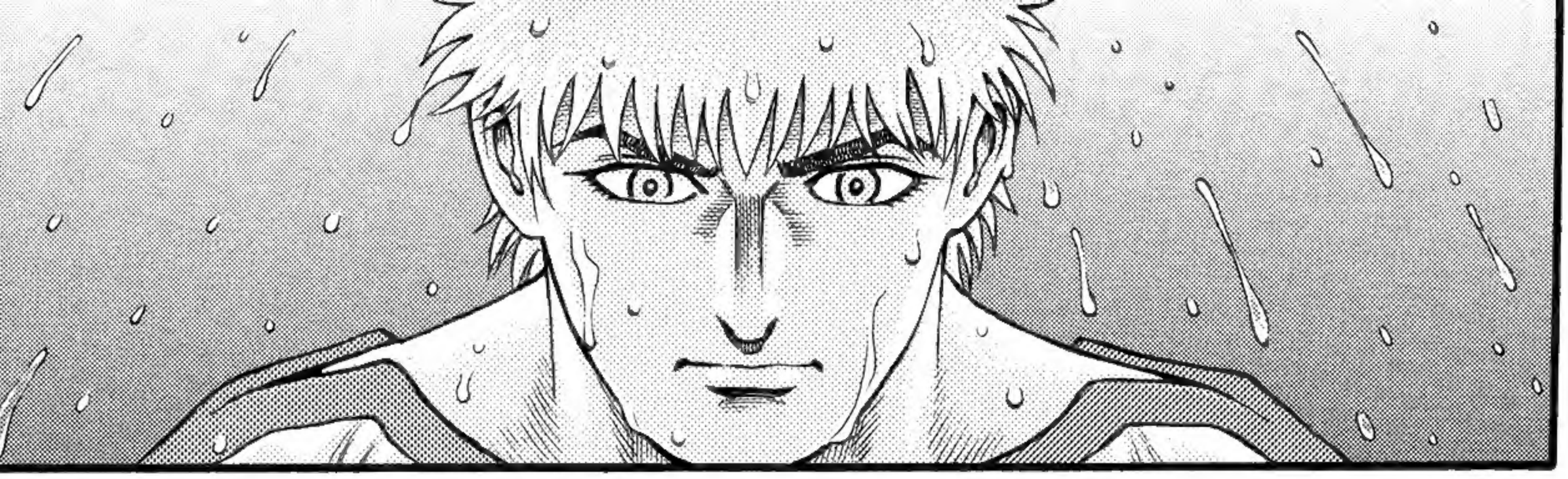
ISN'T IT ALL TOO ABSURD TO BEAR?

ISN'T IT ALL TOO HEARTLESS?

JUST WHAT YOU'D EXPECT FROM DEMITORIUS, LORD OF LIONS!

DAY BY DAY YOU'RE GROWING TO BE MORE LIKE THE COMMANDER!

TELL ME, VALERIA...



THAT IS, THE VICTORS AND LOSERS...

THERE ARE BUT THREE TYPES OF MEN IN THIS WORLD.

THERE ARE THOSE WHO WILL GALLANTLY RISE TO THE CHALLENGE NO MATTER WHAT IT IS.

THOUGH THAT THIRD FATE IS OUT OF THE QUESTION.

THEY ARE UNWORTHY OF MENTION.

AND THEN THERE ARE THE COWARDS WHO NEVER ATTEMPT ANY CHALLENGE THEIR WHOLE LIVES...

TAKE A GOOD LOOK RUSKA!

?

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ONLY THOSE WHO WIN HOLD ANY COMMENDATION.

THIS IS THE WORLD!

WHICH OF THE TWO DID YOU LOOK AT JUST NOW?

RUSKA...

WAS THAT FATHER WOULD NOT RECOGNISE A LOSER... IT WAS SOMETHING HE COULD NOT TOLERATE AND...

AT THAT MOMENT ALL I UNDERSTOOD...

UNABLE TO FLEE FROM THAT MONSTROSITY.

THAT I WOULD SPEND MY ENTIRE LIFE...